THIS WEEK AT THE THEATRES

Colonial—Sunday, "A Courier of Fortune;" Monday and remainder of week, "Three Weeks."

Bungalow—Monday and remainder of week, "A Courier of Fortune."

Grand—Monday and remainder of week, "The Blue Mouse."

Salt Lake—Thursday and remainder of week, "The Morals of Marcus."

This is the crux of the story. It all is revealed in the bedroom of the virtuous manicure—a picture of a typical "furnished room house" of the Times square district of New York, which could not be excelled in graphic artistry. The occupant endeavors to make the man marry the girl. Both are in her room. He cannot, if he would; has a wife whom he married for her money. The friend then demands money for the girl, receiving finally a check for $500. Her fiance comes. She hides the other man, known to have been a pursuer of herself also. The heroine of the situation asks her fiance to take the girl home, and he does. Virtous girl and villainous man left alone. Old scene—of course! But Mr. Montague is writing for the stage of 1909, not 1889, or even 1899. Things happen as we expect—he locks the door, molests her and there is a thumping from the hallway. But it is not the lover come back to see, misunderstand and denounce her. It is the other man's wife. She is accompanied by detectives. The evidence for her divorce is sufficient—the man and woman together in her bedroom at night, the locked door and the check. So when the trust-weeping, despairing, betrayed girl typical of drama, the nearest to a substitution of stage tradition for life in Mr. Montague's play. But her appearance at the last is perhaps his best, as it is his boldest stroke. Her stanch friend of other days does not recognize her when she calls. Nor does the audience. She has pulled through with the $500 and has had her child. It is "put out to board" with a family in Harlem, so it "won't know this life." The mother is no more in tears. She has recognized the fact that a girl "can't get back," and so is playing the game for the most there is in it, carries a gold bag, wears furs, is generous with money, and wants it known that the jay who pays for her flat is "not the only one."

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A son of wild Steele Mackaye could hardly keep being something singular. Percy Mackaye is a writer in metre, blank and rhyme. Some folks deem it poetry, and others do not. The question was disputed when his "Joan of Arc" and "Phaos and Paeon" were acted. Percy wrote "The Canterbury Pilgrims" also, and for a while he expected that Edward H. Sothern and Julia Marlowe would put it on the stage. Julia agreed with Edward that it was a noble composition; but she discovered that, like many another unpracticed playwright, Percy had permitted a peculiar character, meant to be subornate, outgrow the ordinary one created to be a dominant heroine. The scheme included Cecelia Loftus, the mimic, in the role that had thus enlarged its proper limits. Would Julia put herself in the way of being belittled by Cecelia? She would not. So "The Canterbury Pilgrim," a new treatment of Chaucer's early English, went into book prints, and thence into libraries, but not onto the stage.

It has just gone to grass, though, and thereby provides an instance of a play's failure without prejudice against its right of success. Some New York theatres have entrances so narrow, and so remote in corners of lobbies that strangers may well wonder if they're not getting into the wrong house, where wicked showmen mean to shut out a police raid. At the end of the performance, however, the whole rear of the auditorium is opened wide to let the people out in a jiffy. The object of the scant and obscure ingress is to keep street noises from coming in and disturbing the entertainment—to prevent what happened to Percy Mackaye's drama at its introduction on the Barnard college campus.

The greensward was shut in by a tight fence, trees overhung it and the sylvan setting was very lovely. A platform had no painted scenery to mar the pastoral aspect, and the sky of an evening at summer's outset was the roof to this temple of early English literature. However, that far-off covering let in unseasonably cool air, and the women in thin raiment huddled under cloaks, while men buttoned their dress coats, and all were chilled. The performers weren't Barnard student girls, but actors resolute as any barnstormers, who hoped to make an outdoor tour and theatres be cursed. These hardy, stubborn players gave no sign of suffering. But other things nullified their efforts. Electric street cars ground their rails and hummed their motors on a four-minutes' scedule along the street hard by; automobiles honk-honked their horns in all four of the adjacent thoroughfares; trains on an elevated railway rumbled further away; and steamboats on the Hudson and the Harlem sounded their steam whistles frequently. So not much of "The Canterbury Pilgrims" was heard by the few who shivered in gooseflesh to the cold end.

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Maggie Cline and Marie Dressler. Twins in artistic buffoonery. Maggie sang a folk ballad of the Bowery, twenty years ago, about a prize foight betwane MicCloskey an' a nayger. She was a strapping brawny girl, with a voice like a steam calliope, and the graphic song, prejudiced for the white pugilist against the black—as voiced in the refrain, "T'row 'im down, MicCloskey," with whacks, bangs and outcries of tremendous commotion behind the scenes—drew a nightly line of carriages to the late Tony Pastor's variety show. Marie Dressler, as big as Maggie, and pretending to be as husky, came into the footlights of Broadway a dozen years later in the hey-day of Weber and Fields.

Marie differed from Maggie in saving herself from being regarded as a genuine female bruiser. When Maggie remarked, "I'm as tired as if I'd done a day's wash," the audience didn't doubt that she had come from scrub in a tub, whereas in point of fact the tongue with which she vociferated "T'row 'im down, MicCloskey," had been cultured along with her general education in a convent school. She seemed to be really what she purported to be. Marie Dressler, to the contrary, doesn't let us forget that she is only fooling. There is a lady's saving grace, a palpable sense of humor, in the roughest things she does. I say that, because London lately booed her debut.

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It is in "The Boy and the Girl," in an aerial theatre, that Marie Dressler reappears here. After others have held the stage half an hour, she takes possession to sing that "she is a poor working girl," and that is the first of Richard Carle's devices to utilize her in his summer show for 1909. Of course, she travesties a poor, shy, weakling of oppressed labor. Later, she makes use of vim in a Spanish ballad and dance of a Carmen equal to the fascinations of half a dozen Joses and Escamillios.

Marie's best three minutes, though, are in an automobile disaster. Her bulk is too much for the tonneau of the motor car, and she is squeezed into it with difficulty. At length all is ready to start. The whistle toots a warning to clear the way. Pedestrians skurry panic-stricken to safety. The machine plunges off to Marie's merry carolling of a song prefatory to a wild joy ride. Then, bang! Big noise!! Much destruction!!! Marie is overlaid deep in the wreckage. Levers are brought, and she is pried out. She revives for activity during the rest of the play, but to do nothing funnier.

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The one roof garden that grows a crop of vaudeville this summer has an adjoining farmyard on the top of a Belasco theatre; and the most luxuriant crop therein is whiskers. A draught from among the dime museum freaks of nature has brought forth an old fellow with a beard that reaches from his face to his feet. He figures here as the boss, b'gosh, of that gol durned farm with its garden sass and flowers, its hens and ducks, and his cow.

On the opening night, a well known show girl milked that cow on a wager of a wine supper. Really? How do I know? Anyway, she acted the bit of farce neatly. Clad in silk and lace, she said "H'ist," like a milkmaid, seated herself on a three-legged stool, gripped two of bossy's teats in her white hands, and sent streams of milk into a pail held between her shins.

"Didn't I tell you that I came from a dairy farm?" she said to her escorting man.

"But it doesn't prove you are a minister's daughter," the rounder replied.

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The open sides of this aloft theatre let in noises from the street; so the program is made up of things to see, and musical things to hear, with no colloquial sketches whatsoever. An account of this show isn't given for its worth; as it is commonplace; but to inform you what sort of entertainment New Yorkers pay $2 apiece to see, if they insist on best seats and buy of alleged peddlers on the sidewalks. Two young men make a beginning with pantomimic dancing. They are first burglars cracking a safe, next roysterers going home afraid in the dark of their wives, and finally a guest and a waiter in a restaurant; and all the while their steps in clog and shuffle, to take the expert gallery's estimate, are high in technical merit.

Who cares for bicycling in these days of motoring and ballooning? Three men made up for grotesque tramps, and one woman looking as comely as she can be, fill the next quarter of an hour with feats on a variety of cycles, so low that the rider barely clears the ground and so high that he balances away up in the stage's flies—a variety of nondescript vehicles to the aggregate of thirty-one—and they get only moderate applause. An ensuing quartet of musicians fare better with no more merit. They tap zylophones, jingle bells and play brass instruments.

One musician is a comedian. I know it, because his face is the only one blackened like a negro's; and when he gets hold of a 'cello he has comic uncertainty as to which end up to play it.

While he is making up his mind about that, another man rolls a parlor organ in, and a third wipes a cornet with a seeming resolve to blow out his brains through it, should the occasion demand such a tragedy. The three stand solemnly arow on the darkened stage. Then the spotlight shines bright on the fourth member of the quartet. I have wondered why his hair is parted in the middle and smoothed down over his high forehead. He appears with a halo now as a priest in the raiment of his holy office. Focussed in calcium glory, and in the guise of a priest of God, he sings the hymn of "The Palms." Impressively? Why, yes. This was on Memorial day, when the graves of many thousands of blue and gray soldiers were flowered by their surviving companions. Nevertheless, when the mock priest became a buffoon a minute later, the religious effect seemed lost.

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The boomed, rooted, hurrahed debutante in this roof garden is La Belle Americaine. She rides a horse that rivals herself in white beauty. The brute is obedient to the woman's slightest word, and she finally dismisses him with a kiss, after she has done a lot of stunts on his back.

Next comes Lester, a ventriloquist. He illustrates interestingly, I think, the trick of his trade. All the tales of "throwing the voice" are tommy rot. There isn't any such possibility. All the ventriloquists from Wyman the Wizard down to this Lester, simply acquire the knack of uttering without moving their lips; and for illusion they depend on pantomimic suggestion. Lester has a droll dummy, with facial expressions worked by his own fingers, and he all but obliterates himself in putting this figure into seeming dominance. In his own personality, he says almost nothing; but smokes cigarettes and sips highballs while making the image do the talking. For an encore, he carries the mock little man through the audience, speaking between his own moveless lips, yet expertly cocking the hearers' ears to the effigy; and I do avow that, close as twenty inches to my ear, the words seemed to come from the dummy and not from Lester.

Again three men and a woman are the specialties. They are posed as stone carvings. Of course, that is no novelty. They wear no clothes. If they appeared in nature's color, the sight of them would empty the house—of its women, anyway—and put it in the possession of the police. However, they are made to look like marble. This whitening is applied to the bare skin from fingers' tips to toes' ends, and only a fig leaf for each man, and a merge of the woman's legs into drapery, relieves the positive nudity. A round dozen of celebrated statues are exhibited. Right? Wrong? Don't ask me.

The five other acts in this show include Hebrew dialogue and some moving pictures not worth mentioning. That leaves Provost and Rice, Hastings and Wilson, and the Princess Rajah to be particularized. Rajah is the young woman who, as I told you a month ago, does wiggle-waggle dances, and plays with squirmy wormy snakes. She is as horribly fascinating as before. What I can't understand, however, is why the two teams mentioned are permitted to burlesque here. Rice or Provost, I don't know which, is the funny fellow who, year after year, till this the sixth, has been a humpty-dumpty clown. The

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Ralph Stuart as Gerard DeCobalt in "A Courier of Fortune," opening at the Colonial Sunday, moving to the Bungalow Monday for the balance of the week.

Elsa Ryan In "The Blue Mouse" at the Grand theatre four nights starting Monday, June 7.

STIMULATED BY ROOSEVELT IS BROADWAY'S BEST

BY FRANKLIN FYLES.

New York, June 4.—At the start of the winter theatrical season the president of the United States gave the drama a gratuitous boost. Theodore I remarked that "A Gentleman From Mississippi" was bully, with additional words to the same effect. The comedy is running merrily yet. At the end of the season, just as serious drama is gasping its last before the melting and frivolous smiles of musical froth, the president of the United States has administered a desperate dose of artificial stimulant. The other evening Mr. Taft occupied a box at a performance of "The Revellers," fretted fearfully during the first act and, at its end, arose and swept from the theatre, presumably in horror and disgust. How timely! And what a godsend for "The Narrow Path," the latest—and doubtless last serious drama of the New York season! It might have come and gone almost quite unnoticed. But now all the chatter and argument of the immoral drama, with all of its sub-subjects, has been brought back to life by Dr. Tatt's Own Restorative. Report spread that the boldness of "The Narrow Path" would cause a sensation, the more hysterical predicting that it "would not be allowed for a second performance." Straightway a large number of the habitual first nighters gave up their seats for "The Boy and the Girl" so as to be on hand. They must have been disappointed. Bold, frank to a startling degree, "The Narrow Path" certainly is. But it is by no means salacious in the sense "The Girl From Rector's" is. It has not the harmful intent of such really harmless plays of the season as "The Blue Mouse" and "Miss Innocence," which swish their skirts, wink slyly and seem to have done a terrible lot.

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John Montague is the unknown author of "The Narrow Path," and only by those other new dramatists of the season, Eugene Walter in "The Easiest Way" and Edward Sheldon in "Salvation Nell," has a realistic portrayal of sordid sides of New York life been pushed to such a degree. It is bewildering in its accurate fidelity. The "narrow path" is, of course, the difficult road for a penniless girl in the metropolis. The girl in this case is a manicurist, and her strength in withstanding the temptations thrown in the way of a pretty girl thus in contact with men is accentuated by two of her companions less firm. One is open in her vice and when, from her own bad temper, she is thrown over by her lover, she steeps herself in drink and, at the last, is seen a miserable, maudlin slattern. The other has just fallen, does not know that the man is married, and is hopeful that he will make her his wife when she tells him she is about to become a mother.

Marie Doro, "The Morals of Marcus."

Scene from "Three Weeks" at Colonial theatre.